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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BASRAH 000095

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TAGS: [AMGT](#) [ASEC](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [IZ](#)  
SUBJECT: STATE OF EMERGENCY IN BASRAH IS "MESSY"

REF: A) BASRAH 94, B) BASRAH 56

BASRAH 00000095 001.2 OF 002

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BASRAH, DEPARTMENT OF STATE.  
REASON: 1.4 (b), (d)

11. (C) SUMMARY: Little changed on the streets the day after Prime Minister Nouri Al-Maliki completed his one-day visit to Basrah on May 31 and declared a state of emergency for one month in Basrah. REO contacts report that the PM's visit was well received by all residents of Basrah, except local government officials who bore the brunt of the PM's public criticism. More intimidation of local staff who work for Coalition Forces occurred during the PM's visit. Four REO-related deaths have occurred since May 31. END SUMMARY.

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What Does State of Emergency Mean?  
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12. (C) Little has changed as a result of the PM's declaration of a state of emergency in Basrah on May 31. On the recommendation of the Basrah Security Council, the Basrah Chief of Police issued a signed document on June 1 stating that an "Emergency Plan" will be carried out in Basrah Province for thirty days, beginning June 2. All police stations have been placed on high alert. The implications of a state of emergency are still unclear to most REO contacts. REO staff who have left the compound report fewer Iraqi Police than normal on streets and several new Iraqi Army vehicle checkpoints.

13. (C) REO Basrah contacts who attended the May 31 meetings between Maliki and local government, political parties, police, and community leaders uniformly described the proceedings as "messy" and "chaotic." All contacts reported that Governor Mohammed Al Wahili and BPC Chair Obadi attempted to storm out of a meeting with Maliki after he publicly criticized Basrah's poor security and corruption problems; however, they were convinced to return to the meeting before leaving the building. An Iraqi police officer was shot and wounded by one of the PM's bodyguards, who was subsequently arrested. The police officer was treated at the Basrah Teaching Hospital.

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Delegation Formed to Address Security  
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14. (C) A five-member central government delegation in Basrah spent most of June 1 conferring with Basrah Provincial Council (BPC) members and community leaders on security issues. These five members reportedly included: Safa Al Safi (Dawa), Minister

for Provincial Affairs; Seyid Abid, Deputy of former Prime Minister Jafari; Salam Odel Maliki (OMS), former Transportation Minister and originally from Basrah; Hadi Amery, Head of Badr Organization; and an as yet unidentified Sunni representative from the Iraqi Islamic Party.

¶5. (C) Rajeh Al Mosawi, Assistant to the Governor, told the Deputy Regional Coordinator (DRC) in a June 1 meeting that he believed the delegation would allow Governor Mohammed to retain his title but remove all his authoritative power. (NOTE: The Governor has been placed at the head of the Security Committee to implement the police emergency plan. END NOTE.) Rajeh said he believes the government delegation would also replace Chief of Police, Hassan Sewadi, whom Rajeh described as too weak and ineffectual to address the problem of militia infiltration into the police. In Rajeh's opinion, Governor Mohammed was the root cause of most of Basrah's security problems. "There is no need for an emergency plan. Just get rid of the Governor," he said. (NOTE: Rajeh is a civil servant with no political affiliation. END NOTE.)

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Intimidation and Deaths of Local Staff  
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¶6. (C) Sheikh Kadim Al Gatrani, Chief of the Council of Nobles in Basrah, told the DRC on June 1 that vehicles circulating through downtown Basrah on May 31 warned people over loudspeakers not to work for British or American organizations and threatened those who do. Al Gatrani said he heard the threats but did not see the cars himself, but he alleged that "certain political parties" were behind the intimidation. Although he would not name the parties, Gatrani's bias against Governor Mohammed and the Fadillah party are well known (reftel B). Sheikh Kadim was not opposed to the state of emergency declaration, and -- like Rajeh -- said that the residents of Basrah welcomed the PM visit and his hard-line approach to security problems in the city. However, Kadim was pessimistic about the central government's ability to counter the

BASRAH 00000095 002.2 OF 002

militia-infiltrated police in Basrah, and he said that so far all he has seen is talk and no action.

¶7. (C) Two REO-related deaths occurred on May 31. An Iraqi who works for a laundry company subcontracted by KBR was shot and killed after work on May 31. Also on May 31, the father of an Iraqi woman employed by the Danish Mission on the REO compound was shot and killed, possibly after having driven his daughter home. (NOTE: The father is Sunni, which his family believes is why he was targeted. END NOTE.)

¶8. (C) On June 4, a Department of State (DOS) Locally Engaged Staff (LES) member, who worked as the administrative assistant for the REO, and her husband were shot and killed by a motorcyclist while driving home from the REO in their car.

¶9. (C) On June 5, two of the remaining three DOS LES at the REO resigned and the third remained at home. Out of 212 total KBR positions at the REO, only 79 reported for work on the morning of June 5.

¶10. (C) COMMENT: We expect to see a further decrease in staffing at the REO because of the perceived threat of assassination for affiliating with the REO. How the State of Emergency will be implemented in Basrah is far from clear at this point, and militias may take advantage of the chaotic situation to ramp up attacks. END COMMENT.  
MARRANO